THE DECORATIVE ARTS—A NEW PRESENTATION

This Museum recently opened two galleries of decorative arts and a splendidly decorated mid-17th century room from a château in France's lovely Loire valley. Descriptions of the room and of a selection of European decorative arts displayed in the new galleries are the subject of this publication.

The rare, painted paneled room concentrates in a small space the essence of French post-Renaissance style. The two adjacent small octagonal galleries were especially designed to display precious silver, gold, painted enamel and ceramic objects of 16th to 18th century Europe. The room and the galleries adjoin and complement the Museum's collection of 17th and 18th century French paintings. Together with the paintings, they recreate something of the elegance and beauty of the visual arts of Baroque and Rococo Europe and especially of France.

The high level of design and craftsmanship evident in these objects, the overall richness of the paneled walls and ceiling of the small French study, as well as the elegance of its furniture, are redolent of the quality of life in Europe several centuries ago. Often these objects of carefully worked precious metals, sumptuous enamels, colorful ceramics, and household furnishings tell us more about the life and times of their age than do paintings which are usually visual poetry rather than objects of use.

To present the post-Renaissance view of the richness of utilitarian objects the same high standards have been applied in the acquisition of decorative arts as those pursued in obtaining paintings.

Toledo's Museum does not seek to exhibit collections of encyclopedic scope but instead presents through careful selection a limited number of examples of the essential greatness of man's creative spirit. Objects of the highest artistic quality are always rare—and difficult to acquire. The Museum counts itself fortunate to have been able to acquire so many distinguished objects during the past few years.

We are most grateful to the donors who have contributed to these new galleries. Mr. and Mrs. Marvin S. Kobacker of Toledo have generously given funds to acquire the room from the Château de Chenailles as well as the furniture for that room. A beautiful and rare 18th century French silver porringer is the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley K. Levison. Some years ago the late Royce G. Martin gave a magnificent group of Sèvres porcelain in memory of his wife. All other works of art illustrated, unless otherwise designated, have been acquired with funds bequeathed by Edward Drummond Libbey, founder of the Museum, or by his wife, Florence Scott Libbey.

Otto Wittmann, Director

Cover: Room from the Château de Chenailles, French, mid-17th century. Ht. 149 inches; floor 191 x 154⅝ inches. The room and its contents are the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Marvin S. Kobacker.

Back Cover: Chitarrone (Stringed instrument). Italian, about 1600. 69.334.

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A ROOM FROM THE CHATEAU DE CHENAILLES

The Château de Chenailles is located in the Loire Valley southeast of Orléans in the area of France best known for its splendid châteaux. From this château comes a room of the mid-17th century now installed at this Museum.

West of Chenailles on the Loire are royal châteaux of the middle ages and Renaissance such as Angers, Blois, and Chambord. By the time that construction of Chenailles began in the late 16th century, important government officials and wealthy merchants were able to build somewhat more modest châteaux in the manner of these royal estates.

Robert Miron and his wife Marie Vallée, whose family had purchased the property of Chenailles in the 16th century, were members of this newly rrived seigneurial class. Miron, a man of considrable reputation, was General Comptroller of nances to the King and provost of the trade and craft guilds in Paris. He and his wife were the initial builders of the Château de Chenailles. It was the letters of their first and last names which were intertwined to form the monograms on the shutters. It is possible that the shutters as well as the windows and framework of the room were created during the lifetime of Miron and his wife. The boldly carved and painted woodwork and paintings were created later in the Louis XIII style, associated with the middle of the 17th century. It was François Vallée, a descendant of Miron and Marie Vallée, who probably commissioned these decorations. Carrying on the family tradition, François was president and treasurer of the Bureau of Finances in Paris, General Comptroller of Wars, and overseer of the royal household. In spite of the distribution of wealth from the nobility to the bourgeoisie during the first half of the 17th century, there were few capable of affording the decoration seen in the room from the Château de Chenailles. In addition to their initial rarity, many of these precious rooms were dismantled in order to accommodate the new architectural and decorative styles of succeeding generations in the expansive periods of Louis XIV and his successors.

Shutter. Carved and painted wood 29¾ x 17¼ inches.

Rooms like this formed part of suites in châteaux and in large townhouses called "hôtels." Developed during the first half of the 17th century in order to receive visitors, such suites consisted of one or two antechambers, a large chamber, a "cabinet" and a wardrobe. The antechambers were used as waiting rooms and sometimes as dining rooms. The chamber was a large, formal receiving room, sometimes containing a bed since it was the custom of the day to receive while in bed. The "cabinet," of which the room from the Château de Chenailles is an example, was an intimate room adjoining the large chamber. It was used as an office and study and occassionally as a dressing room. Frequently, this more private room was the most richly ornamented portion of the suite.

The style of this room is known by the name of the reigning monarch, Louis XIII (1601-1643). It flourished during the second quarter of the 17th century and was characterized by a profuse decoration from floor to ceiling, by equal balance main-

tained between woodwork and paintings, and by deep, three dimensional carving of curvilinear rounded straps, scrolls, swags, and caryatids. All parts of the decoration including the paintings were a part of the overall design and were built into the framework of the room. It is perhaps surprising for us to think that many of the 17th century figure, landscape, and still life paintings which today hang as independent paintings in museums once formed part of decorative schemes similar to that of this "cabinet."

The paintings in such a room were carefully coordinated for sumptuous effect and allegorical significance. These elaborate allegories were intended to reflect the status and culture of the owner. In this room the story of Rinaldo and Armida is related in the paintings of the upper level and ceiling. The tale was a favorite of the period and derived from the long narrative poem, *Jerusalem Delivered*, by the Italian poet, Torquato Tasso (1544-1595). The story recounted the temptations, struggles, and valiant deeds of the Christian knight Rinaldo and his companions in their quest to recapture Jerusalem during the First Crusade. Rinaldo was captured by the temptress, Armida, who was sent by the devil to destroy the Christian cause. Rinaldo was saved from the effects of indolence and lust by his companions. The Cardinal Virtues, Prudence, Justice, and Fortitude, represented as female figures on the lower level, figuratively and physically supported the legend above them. The ceiling was decorated with a climatic episode from the main story in which Armida carried Rinaldo in her dragon-drawn chariot to her palace in the Fortunate Isles. This scene was surrounded by personifications of the Four Elements. These allusions were used to give the main story the impact of added universality. Landscape paintings, as here, or still lifes were combined with the narrative paintings on the lower levels for further interest and variety.

Pastoral Landscape. Oil on panel. 41⅛ x 30⅜ inches.

The decorations in such a room were executed by several different artists in keeping with their personal specialities. Here the landscape paintings, executed in the fashionable Italianate manner, were probably painted by a Flemish or Dutch artist. Most of the scenes from the story of Rinaldo and Armida were executed by another artist working in the style of Simon Vouet (1590-1649), the greatest French court painter of the first half of the 17th century. In fact, the paintings in this room were probably based on a series by Vouet of the same subject created in the mid-1630's for a townhouse in Paris. Another artist executed the female personifications of the Cardinal Virtues and, perhaps, some scenes in the Rinaldo and Armida series.

A room like the "cabinet" from the Château de Chenailles was complemented by furniture as elaborate as the room itself. Dark woods, such as walnut and ebony, were combined with ivory, metal, and stone insets whose forms often recalled those of architecture. The contrasting tones and forms of the furniture accorded well with the walls. Precious objects and fine ceramics, as may be viewed in cases adjoining this room, were placed on table tops along the cornics which separated the upper and lower sections of the wall.

The exuberant opulence which resulted, so characteristic of the mid-17th century in France, was to be aggrandized and brought into sober order to become the monumental, classicizing style of Louis XIV in the later 17th century.

Katharine C. Lee

The Raging Armida. Oil on canvas. 52 x 28⅛ inches.

Fortitude. Oil on panel. 48⅛ x 20⅛ inches.

Wall with paintings from the story of Rinaldo and Armida (upper level) and the Cardinal Virtues, Prudence and Justice (lower level).

Draw-leaf Table (detail). French, early 17th century. Walnut with insets. Ht. 32½ inches. 69.225.

Side Chair. French, early 17th century. Oak with insets. 69.222.

Armchair. French, mid-17th Century. Carved wood, painted and gilded. Ht. 41½ inches. 69.220.

Carpet. French, 1607-1627. Faubourg Saint-Marcel factory. Wool. 94⅝ x 61½ inches. 68.86.

FRENCH RENAISSANCE ENAMELS

The 16th century in France was an age of luxury. The drama of court life and the magnificence of the art and fashion found there are well reflected in the rare and significant examples of enamel painting done at that time.

Limoges, a provincial town in central France famed for its champlevé enamels of the 12th and 13th centuries, became the leading center for painted enamels in the late 15th and 16th centuries. Its importance was established by the availability of materials, the encouragement of patrons, and a strong guild in the city.

Painted enamels were made by fusing a layer of enamel (a paste of finely ground glass colored with oxides of metal) to both sides of a piece of metal, usually copper. Each enamel color, restrained but glowing, was then applied and fired separately. The originality of this craft was in the formulae developed for the composition of the enamel, its coloring and the method of achieving fusion. These were well guarded secrets, known only to a few families in Limoges.

Enamel painting was executed with great skill and elegance. Both religious and classical scenes were depicted on objects intended for the Church and for the nobility. Objects, such as tazzas, plates, ewers, and small boxes, served both functional and ornamental purposes. The scenes and designs were generally not original, but were borrowed and adapted from engravings by such masters as Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528), Martin Schongauer (1430-1491), and Marcantonio Raimondi (1420-1534). Toward the middle of the 16th century, many enamelers, influenced by the engraving technique, developed a monochromatic palette, of grays, referred to as "grisaille."

One is impressed with the jewel-like quality effected in painted enamels. Because of the firing technique employed, colors remain as fresh and bright as when they were first applied. These glowing objects must have played an important role in the dark French Renaissance interiors that they once occupied, reflecting the glittering splendor of the life that surrounded them, as well as representing the culmination of the noble tradition of enameling.

Roger M. Berkowitz

Casket. French (Limoges), mid-16th century. Enamel. Attributed to NICOLAS NOYLIER. Ht. 4⅞ inches; length 6⅝ inches. 69.290. The two scenes depict "The Conversion of Othon" and "Daniel Destroying the Idols." Detail below left.

Ewer. French (Limoges), about 1560. Enamel. PIERRE REYMOND (1513-1584). Ht. 11⅜ inches. Monogrammmed: PR. 69.293.

Covered Tazza. French (Limoges). Enamel. JEAN DE COURT (active about 1555-1585). Ht. 9⅞ inches; Diam. 7 15/16 inches. Monogrammed on inside of cup: I.C. 69.292.

Covered Beaker. German (Lüneburg), about 1500. Silver-gilt. Ht. 12⅜ inches. 61.13.

Cup. German (Augsburg), about 1595. Silver-gilt. ZACHARIAS FLICKER. Ht. 3¾ inches; diam. 3 15/16 inches. 55.14.

OBJECTS OF PRECIOUS METAL

Gold and silver have always been precious metals and objects executed in these materials have symbolized the wealth and importance of their owners. An apex in the art of metalwork is found in the exuberance and virtuosity of the Renaissance goldsmith. Intimate objects, such as cups or beakers, and monumental commemorative pieces, such as covered cups, called pokals, were produced. These works by 16th century German craftsmen demonstrated equally well the exploitation of rich silver-gilt surfaces with elegant designs and exacting modeling.

With the 17th century came a restrained attitude toward the rare metals. The majority of French silver products of this period made use of broad, unadorned surfaces. Detail, although as meticulously executed as on the more elaborate works of the 16th century, was carefully considered and

Commemorative Cups (called Pokals). (left) German (Nuremberg). Silver-gilt. HANS BEUTMÜLLER (active 1588-1622). Ht. 21¾ inches. 55.13. German (Augsburg). Silver-gilt. Enamel work attributed to DAVID ATTEHSTETTER (active 1570-1617). Ht. 22 inches. 56.63. (right) German (Strasbourg). Silver-gilt. LINHARD BAWER (active 1555-about 1583). Ht. 19⅞ inches. 62.41.

Inkwell and Sandbox. French, 1697. Silver. JEAN III MASSE. Ht. 2 7/16 inches; width and depth 3½ inches. 69.303, 69.304.

used to set off relatively plain surfaces effectively. Toward the end of the 17th century, this decoration drew much of its inspiration from architectural detail.

French silver is especially rare. Throughout the many wars in France's history, silver objects were often melted down to supplement the government's treasury. Those examples which survived the crucible magnificently attest to the expert craftsmanship of the French goldsmith of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Silver and gold were not the only metals employed for the production of sophisticated objects for the wealthy At the end of the 17th and throughout the 18th centuries, one finds many articles in the decorative style of André-Charles Boulle (1642-1732), cabinetmaker of Louis XIV. Boulle used brass, tortoiseshell, and gilded bronze to create furniture and objects for members of European court society. The technique which Boulle made famous and which attracted many other craftsmen involved the application of an inlaid design of delicately engraved brass and tortoiseshell on a wood base. A sense of architectural solidity was then achieved by attaching handsome mounts made of gilded cast bronze, or ormolu.

The 18th century witnessed an increasing inclination to enrich the surfaces of silver. In the early part of the century, a covered porringer, or écuelle, was often decorated with a simple gadrooned surface, as seen here in the example by Gabriel Tillet. By the third quarter of the 18th century, however, this style had been transformed into a rococo expression, richly embossed and delicately engraved, in the écuelle by Robert Vinsac. They are both, however, important and elegant proofs of the degree of excellence attained by the French silversmith.

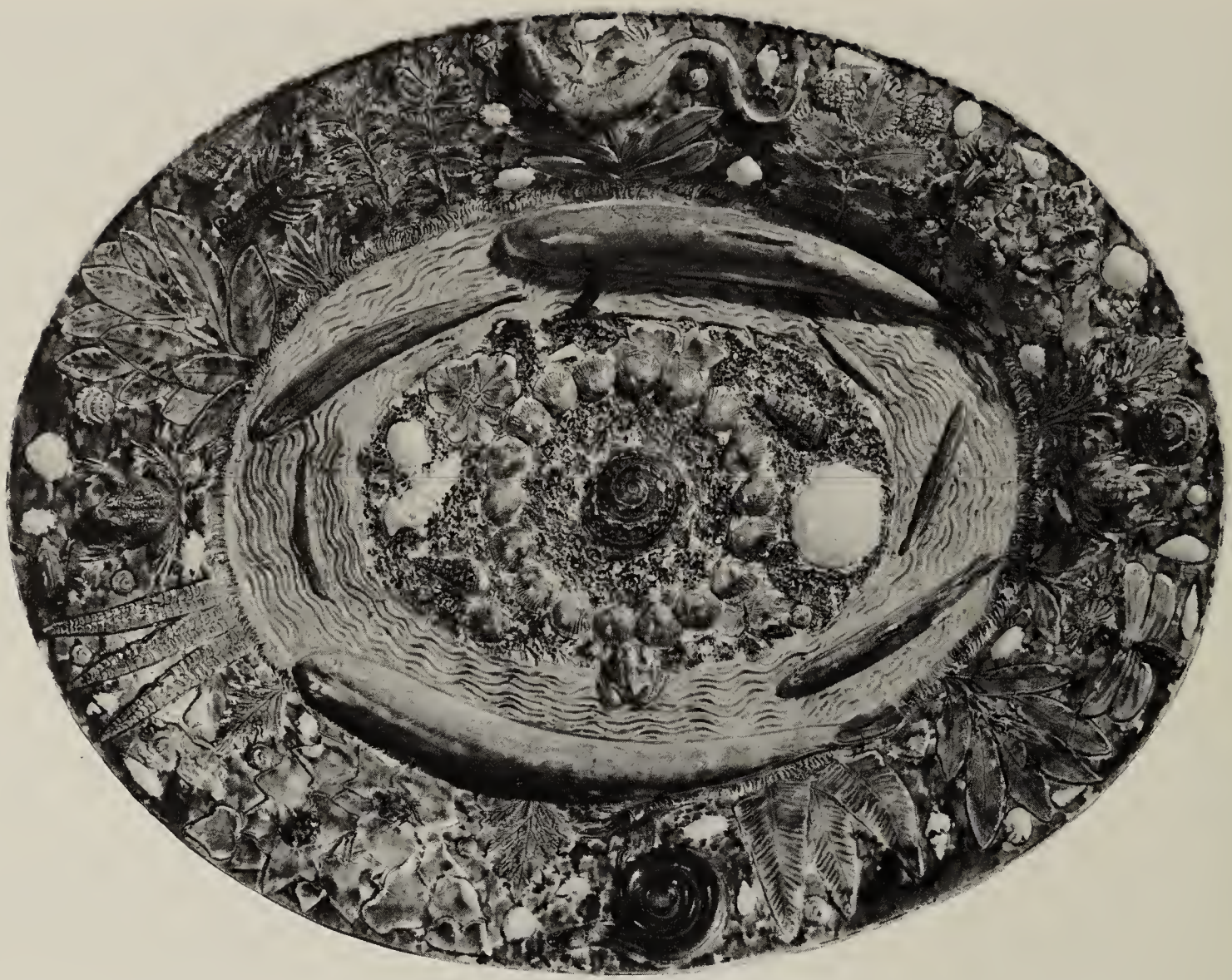
R. M. B.

Covered Porringers (Écuelles). (left) French (Bordeaux), 1717-1722. Silver. GABRIEL TILLET, fils (1677-1757). Diam. with handles 11⅜ inches. 69.91. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley K. Levison. (right) French (Toulouse), 1762. Silver. ROBERT VINSAC. Diam. with handles 12 11/16 inches. 68.75. Detail below.

Tureen and Stand (Detail on opposite page). French, 1783. JACQUES CHARLES MONGENOT. Ht. 15½ inches; width 17⅝ inches; diam. 15 inches. 67.13.

This rare piece of French silver was part of a lavish dinner service bearing the arms of a Neapolitan noble family, Pignatelli. The mermaid supports and leaf ornament with flower-crowned masks indicate its classical inspiration.

Box. (one of a pair) French, early 18th century. Tortoise-shell, brass, and wood. Style of ANDRÉ-CHARLES BOULLE (1642-1732). Ht. 5 inches; width 9⅞ inches; length 12½ inches. 70.7, 70.8. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Marvin S. Kobacker.



Basin. French, late 16th century. Earthenware. Style of BERNARD PALISSY (about 1510-1590). Length 20½ inches; width 16⅛ inches. 69.302. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Marvin S. Kobacker.

EARLY EUROPEAN CERAMICS

Pottery in France was extremely rare during the Renaissance and was executed primarily in imitation of Italian majolica, a tin-glazed earthenware. Two potteries of the 16th century however, showed great originality. The Saint-Porchaire factory (active about 1510-1565) produced fragile wares noted for their complex decoration, such as stamped impressions like those of bookbinders and darker clay inlaid designs in the manner of niello, a metalworking technique. There are less than 100 known examples of this still enigmatic ware in existence, and the potters have remained unidentified.

Influenced also by Italian majolica, Bernard Palissy (about 1510-1590) achieved rich polychrome lead glazes unparalleled in his time. These glazes were applied over relief-decorated pottery. His decorative devices were often cast directly from nature, while elegant figural themes were inspired by the School of Fontainebleau.

In the last quarter of the 16th century, three brothers of the Conrade family and some of their fellow Genoese potters established a factory at Nevers, France, a town famed for the quality of its clay. From about 1585 to the middle of the 17th century, these craftsmen produced objects of faience (the French term for majolica) decorated in the Italian style. About 1630, Pierre Custode settled in Nevers and developed a distinctive type of decoration known as "bleu Persan," or Persian blue, a style whose design was in imitation of the Chinese. The appeal of Chinese decoration grew during the 17th and 18th centuries as Western traders to the Far East returned with Chinese porcelains.

Another important pottery was established in France at Rouen by Edme Poterat (d. 1687). Poterat filled the need of the nobility for faience which would serve as a replacement for the quantities of silver destroyed during the numerous wars of

France. Rouen was noted for its standards of quality, the large size of the pieces executed, and the invention of a border motif which resembled embroidery and repeated itself much like a kaleidoscope. The faience of Rouen also showed the influence of Chinese, Persian, and rococo design. Its appealing decoration was often freely adopted by other factories in France, such as the one at Sinceny.

Chinese porcelain had been introduced to Europe as early as the 15th century. Very much admired for its fine surface, hard body and translucency, many attempts were made to imitate it. It was not until 1709, however, that Johann Friedrich Böttger, a chemist working for the Elector of Saxony at Meissen, Germany, discovered the chemical secret of its composition: a particular clay, called kaolin, mixed with petuntse (feldspathic rock) and sand. About four years after this discovery, a factory was established at Meissen. Many protective measures were taken to guard the secret of their manufacture. Meissen remained the European leader of style, quality, and production until the Seven Years War (1756-1763) ravaged Saxony. Subsequently, the secret of its manufacture became known and was developed to an impressive refinement at Sèvres, France. Beginning as an effort to emulate Meissen, Sèvres soon developed a quality which made it the leading porcelain factory in Europe and an eloquent expression of the 18th century French taste.

R.M.B.

Ewer. French (Saint-Porchaire), about 1550. Earthenware. Ht. 8⅞ inches. 69.286.

Serving Plate. French (Nevers), about 1640. Earthenware. Diam. 22 inches. 69.273.

Covered Vase. French (Nevers) about 1700. Earthenware. JEHAN CUSTODE. Ht. 15 inches; diam. with handles 14⅛ inches. 69.276.

Dish. French (Sinceny). Earthenware. MABRIAT (1733-1775). Diam. 12 inches. 69.282.

Serving Plate. French (Rouen), about 1720. Earthenware. Diam. 22 5/16 inches. 69.279.

Camel. German (Meissen), about 1745. Porcelain. JOHANN KAENDLER (1706-1775). Ht. 9 inches. 56.61.

Bowl for Rinsing Glasses. French (Sèvres), 1771-1772. Porcelain. Ht. 5½ inches; length 11½ inches; width 8 inches. 51.401. Gift of Royce G. Martin in Memory of his Wife. Below is a selection of pieces from this dessert service which was made for Cardinal-Prince Louis de Rohan.

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EUROPEAN DECORATIVE ARTS

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